

BUS-SPOTTING + A STORY



ORPHAN#1 | FOUND PHOTO FOUNDATION

## PAULA ROUSH | MSDM PUBLICATIONS

BUS SPOTTING + A STORY is a 4-part photo-essay.

Part 1 (Transport Enthusiasts) elucidates tangible nature of the collection through email + paper correspondence and copyright stamps at the back of the photographs

Parts 1 and 2 (Bus Ride) comprise a sequence of 32 photographs in the form of twin books, split in images of double and single-decker buses

Part 3 (A Story) engages with the narrative and fictional potential of found photographs with reference to the genre of photo-romance

BUS-SPOTTING + A STORY marks the launch of the Orphan Series. Each work in the series explores a particular approach to publishing the printed material in the FOUND PHOTO FOUNDATION archive. Orphan #1 is the result of the collaboration between paula roush, artist, publisher and collector and Mireille Ribière, author, photographer and scholar.



msdm publications

## DEDICATED TO TRANSPORT ENTHUSIASTS



RT 1749

RT 1749 - St Helier

- 8 MAR 1969

Colin Stannard

COPYRIGHT: PHIL PICKEN

SUBJECT: RT 1102

LOCATION: NORTHFLEET

DATE: 1-6-76

498



RT 3319



Hi Mireille

If I can help by pointing ideas in an appropriate direction, I shall be happy to oblige. I have in the past created and edited books on the subject of buses and transport interest generally, mainly of a photographic nature, but always aimed at the enthusiast market. I don't really know the focus of your proposed work or what your intended audience/market is and that too might help me to help you. I am guessing that your intended readership is more general and I imagine something of a 'coffee table' publication in preparation here perhaps?

There is perhaps something worth noting though - forgive me if you are already aware. The world of people not interested in transport and not close to people who have that interest - i.e the majority - usually only see the 'spotter' out there on the loose. Understandably, a high proportion of these are somewhat eccentric. They are seen as writing down numbers of buses, locomotives, aircraft, etc which they then transcribe into their notebooks and often have the 'nerdy' image. No denying this. However, often many young people (mostly male) began their interest this way and develop a

more sophisticated interest in transport - often leading to a career in the industry.

My own interest started this way and indeed I spent all my working life in the industry. Particular leanings develop - for me it is where rail lines and bus routes go and why and how they develop. For others, it is a technical/engineering bent that develops, and that, for example, has created many of the preserved railways which are now heritage attractions all over the country.

If I may go on to bore you a little about my own course: I joined the then London Transport from school in 1964 - initially as an office boy. I later became a bus driver and in the years that followed went through umpteen supervisory and management roles to spend my last 11 years as a project manager on the Croydon tram project in south London, opened in 2000. I still drive heritage 'Routemaster' wedding buses for two companies on a casual basis following my early retirement from TfL and also for the London Transport Museum.

My interest has centred on London and I have taken and still do take photos recording changing transport over the years. This extends almost by default through the photography into



infrastructure, street scene changes and local history, the changes to which are there in the background of many photos.

Outside of the capital, my main transport interest is tramways of the world, old and new. I enjoy a happy marriage and much of our lives now involves looking after our 4 grandchildren (except on fine days, when I get out with the camera!).

I hope this has helped a little to widen the appreciation of what the majority of transport enthusiasts really are and do with their lives, perhaps beyond the popularly believed 'spotting' which in actual fact applies to a small minority. Snobbish maybe, but the many 'enthusiasts' really hate the term 'spotters' and view it as derisory. Hence, I do not have any of the notebooks of the kind you seek, but I should be please to assist in any other way if you think I could help.

kind regards,  
Colin

Hi Colin,

My most sincere apologies for using the word 'spotter', which as soon as I had written it felt wrong, but I did not know which word would be better suited, now I know. I certainly have no wish to patronise you, or anyone else for that matter.

An artist's book is a limited edition hand-made book, which is usually exhibited and, with a lot of luck, purchased by a museum or a collector (which basically covers the costs of production). If they are successful they can be reprinted, but it has not happened to us yet.

It is the first time I work with archives, paula is the specialist and she has a whole collection of found photographs which she has been given or has purchased at flea markets. Sometimes as is the case here the photographers are named, in which case she seeks permission to use the material. Not all found photography is interesting, this particular set is interesting because of the coherence, the common purpose, and the fact that the photographic point of view is consistent.

We are not interested in transport as such, but in photography both aesthetically as well as sociologically and historically. Some of the photographs are really pleasing in themselves, and looking at them all in detail is like peering into another world: the townscapes, the passengers, the advertisements, the place names. Arranging them in particular sequences, is a way of bringing out these various aspects and create a new kind of coherence.

The original idea was to create a fictional storyline to obtain a narrative sequence, but it looks as though it might be changing. And as we progressed we realised there was a whole community of bus enthusiasts out there that we did not know about. The intention when working with archival material is never to poke fun at the material, on the contrary – there is no point in doing it if you don't have genuine interest in and respect for it.

The idea of producing a table of contents based on the note book format is not cynical, it seemed an efficient way of showing some of the considerations that went into the taking of some of the photographs, RT

numbers sometimes appear on the back of the photographs. But perhaps the considerations are more varied and cannot be so easily summarised. Perhaps it would be enough to give the model of those buses whose plate numbers are legible and the transport museum might be able to help.

We'll have to see.

In any case, many thanks for telling me about you and your career, which actually confirm our general impression of the transport enthusiast's community.

Kind regards,  
Mireille



Mireille,

Thanks for your response. Indeed it is the background of everyday life that many transport photos capture in their background by default that can be of interest. Everyone takes photos of tourist icons, but very little record appears of the mundane surroundings that we take for granted and don't even notice gradually changing.

What you did touch on before but I failed to answer was of course the meaning of 'RT.' This is a type of bus. In addition to its legal registration plate, each bus has a fleet number. In London, this has traditionally been prefixed by letters denoting the type of bus each vehicle is. RT is one of these and the bulk of the double-deck London fleet consisted of 4825 of these throughout the fifties, sixties and up to 1979.

This number appears on the body of the bus - e.g 'RT4321' as it's identity, and will be seen in many photographs.

The more famous and later start date bus was the RM (and the longer version,

RML), more often known as Routemasters. These started at the end of the fifties and remained in regular service until 2005, after which a handful have been kept for tourist attractions, but in normal service, now just on route 15.

Many others still exist with private operators and it is those that I and others drive for wedding parties, etc, and these are still often seen out and about in London.

I hope this bit of info helps on that score. Otherwise, pleased to help answer any other queries you may have that may arise.

kind regards,

Colin

RT 1895

101

Copyright — G. MEAD

6 Windmill Avenue

Ewell, Surrey

Date **27 AUG 1961** No. **RT 1895 A**

Place **ST. HELIER** Photo No. **1895**

COPYRIGHT PHOTO No. 421c RT 429a  
BY J. G. S. SMITH  
DETAILS Drift Br

#1 of the ORPHAN series

edited by paula roush

BUS-SPOTTING

+

A STORY

photographs from the FOUND PHOTO FOUNDATION by colin  
stannard, douglas f. parker, g. mead, j. g. s. smith, phil picken,  
robert f. mack, t.e.s., t. l. jones, and unknown photographers.

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Photographs -  
please do not bend



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Colin Stannard



































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SOUTHDOWN























































\*\*\*

# A STORY

\*\*\*

One day L... got up early



picked up a bag and left.







STRAIGHT  
THE SHOP

ANTI  
PRESS

DH 538

C



L... didn't appear in the Inspector's office that morning,

yet was seen at the bus depot on the same day.

WAITING ROOM

GLOBAL

INSPECTORS  
OFFICES

LONDON

Triumph

8157 CD



L... must have boarded one of the buses,  
but there's no knowing which.







There were reported sightings of L...



in both Kent and Sussex.



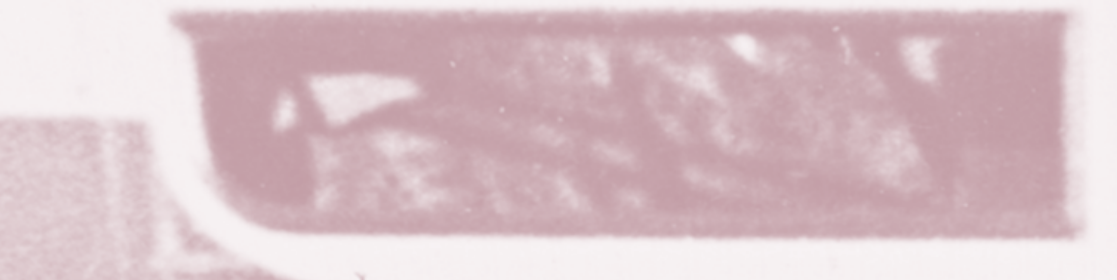








There had been rumours of an affair with a bus driver.









LUMB'S  
TOURS

DON









As I grew up, I often thought about L...





One could just hop on a bus and make a new life...



I started missing school.



I went on excursions. I toured London.





I was getting obsessed with buses;



they were shaping my life.



I even bought a camera and took pictures of them.





One day I heard that, soon after disappearing,





L... had been run over by a school bus.











































L3

EUROPABUS

DETENTEUR D'UN DROIT DE  
PARCOURSIR LE TERRITOIRE

















































